DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 212 369 PS 012 633

TITLE Honeywell's Working Parents Task Force. Final Report and Recommendations.
INSTITUTION Honeywell, Inc., Minneapolis, Minn.
PUB DATE Oct 81
NOTE 16p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Day Care Centers; *Employed Parents; Employer Employee Relationship; *Flexible Working Hours; *Needs Assessment; *Parent Education
IDENTIFIERS Employer Supported Child Care; Honeywell Inc

ABSTRACT

This publication provides a summary of the Honeywell Working Parent Task Force's recommendations on how to solve problems experienced by working parents. The Task Force consisted of three committees: the Employment Practices Committee (EPC); the Parent Education Committee (PEC); and the Child Care Facilities Committee (CCFC). After examining a variety of employment practices which affect working parents, the EPC found that the main problem experienced by these parents when managing work and family responsibilities was inflexible work schedules. Following an exploration of several alternative work options, the committee began a thorough evaluation of flextime. As a result, a working definition of flextime was developed, current Honeywell policy and practices regarding flextime were identified, and local and national employers were surveyed about their flextime practices. The EPC concluded that Honeywell should adopt a flextime policy which endorses flextime wherever possible. The work of the PEC was based on the recognition of the challenges faced by working parents as they try to manage both work and family responsibilities. The PEC focused on the kinds of information needed by working parents and how best to present this information. The two major vehicles recommended for providing information to parents were working parents seminars and distribution of printed materials. Finally, the CCFC, after reviewing studies related to child care facilities in Minneapolis and conducting interviews with other large employers and professionals who deliver services to families and children, identified the 10 most serious problems faced by working parents and suggested several recommendations for overcoming these problems. A draft of the proposed flextime policy, as well as information about Minneapolis's Computerized Child Care Information Network and the CCFC's recommendation to develop on-site child care facilities, are included in the appendices. (Author/MP)

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# Honeywell's Working Parents Task Force

## Final Report and Recommendations

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October, 1981

Honeywell

## Final Report and Recommendations

## Prepared by Honeywell's
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# INTRODUCTION

Honeywell's interest in the concerns of working parents has grown as dramatic changes within the American family have occurred. Since the 1950's, women have entered the labor force at an increasing rate. Economic necessity and desire for personal achievement have changed the role of women within the family. Men are assuming more responsibility for the care of their children. As the divorce rate increases, so does the percentage of children with single parents.

For these reasons, the traditionally separate worlds of employment and the family are becoming more closely tied. Problems in one are are increasingly related to performance in the other.

In July, 1980, Honeywell's Women's Task Force published a study describing the child care and related concerns of working parents at Honeywell. Nearly 25% of the respondents reported having serious child care problems in one or more of the following areas:

1. Locating a child care provider.
2. Locating quality child care.
3. Finding affordable child care.
4. Finding child care which is close to work or home.
5. Locating child care facilities which are compatible with the employee's work schedule.

The relationship between child care problems and loss of productivity was manifested in absenteeism and lateness. Twenty-six percent of the respondents attributed 61% of the total absences or an average of 8 days a year to child care related problems. Parents also expressed concern that their productivity was limited because they were distracted by concern for their children's welfare. Production managers at Honeywell concur that unresolved family problems adversely affect an employee's ability to work effectively.

In response to these findings, a full-time consultant was appointed for one year to examine the problems of working parents and to coordinate all child care and related programs at Honeywell. A task force of employees became the principal vehicle used to explore these issues.

In March, 1981, a Working Parents Task Force was convened to develop solutions to the problems of working parents. The task force represented the following groups: all Minneapolis area divisions; exempt, non exempt, and hourly employees; various levels of management and employee relations staff; and a Teamsters Local #1145 business agent. Its major focus was to explore options and develop recommendations which help working parents reduce conflicts between their work and family responsibilities. The task force was divided into three committees: employment practices, parent education, and child care facilities.

## EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES COMMITTEE

After examining a variety of employment practices which impact working parents, the Employment Practices Committee concluded that inflexible work schedules were the most basic problem in managing work and family responsibilities. After exploring several alternative work options, the committee began a thorough evaluation of flextime.

A working definition of flextime was developed, current Honeywell policy and practices regarding flextime were identified, and local and national employers were surveyed about their use of flextime.

The committee defined flextime in the following way:

> Flextime is a work scheduling system which allows employees to choose the time at which they start and end their work day within the guidelines established by individual departments. Each department designs a system to meet its specific production needs. In some departments, business conditions may not permit the use of flextime.
>
> There are many variations on the concept of flextime but, generally, the length of the work day is extended to include earlier starting times and later quitting times. Usually, there is a core time during which all employees are expected to be working.

At Honeywell, a 1974 Corporate Employee Relations Bulletin encourages locations to consider adopting a flextime policy but does not endorse a company wide use of flextime. In practice, many exempt and non exempt employees have a flextime option, but few production area employees have flexible work hours.

For families in which both parents or a single parent work, the logistics of transporting children to and from child care or school can present major difficulties. When employees have an early start time, work later than the traditional closing time of child care facilities, or work second or third shift, the problems are even more complicated. Flextime could substantially reduce the child care problems of working parents.

Several local and national companies using flextime were surveyed with positive results reported from both an employer's and an employee's perspective. Flextime employers consistently report 10 - 15% reduction of absenteeism that is sustained over time; employees also report favorable attitudes toward flextime. Locally, both Control Data Corporation and Rosemount Engineering report successful experiences using flextime. Their employees are enthusiastic about the opportunities flextime offers for better management of work, family, and personal time.

The Employment Practices Committee concluded that Honeywell should adopt a flextime policy which endorses flextime wherever possible, including production areas. A draft of the proposed policy is included in Appendix 1.

The availability of permanent part-time positions was a second employment practice examined by the committee. This employment option allows employees to work 20 or more hours per week but less than 40 hours.

Employees who need to work less than full-time have few alternatives. Honeywell's permanent part-time positions are currently limited to low level clerical jobs and, for hourly employees, cafeteria work. There are few career oriented permanent part-time positions for technical, professional or managerial employees. Job sharing, where one full-time position is shared by two employees is one option which could be made available to employees whose family responsibilities necessitate part-time employment.

At the present time, the major barrier to increasing the number of part-time positions is employee benefit costs. Depending on the benefits selected, two part-time employees cost the company between $650 and $1650 more than one full-time employee.

Because of the additional costs associated with part-time positions, the Employment Practices Committee elected not to endorse an increase in part-time positions at this time. However, the committee members did conclude that this employment practice should be examined in more depth with an eye toward removing the barriers to providing part-time work opportunities.

## PARENT EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The work of this committee was based on the recognition of the challenges working parents face as they try to manage both work and family responsibilities. The committee focused on what kinds of information was needed by working parents and how best to present the information. Two major vehicles were identified.

**1. Working Parents Seminars**

The committee concluded that a series of programs should be held at Honeywell locations where large numbers of young parents work, (e.g., Golden Valley, New Brighton, St. Louis Park, and General Offices). If the series is found to be useful to parents, the seminars would be offered at other locations. Each series will offer:

- Information about community resources.
- Skills which help parents function more effectively and confidently in their work and family roles.
- Opportunities for employees to share their concerns and solutions with resource people and other employees.

The contents of the program are outlined below:

- How to make the best use of the limited time available with children and other family members.
- How to build children's self esteem, ability to assume responsibility, and sense of independence.
- How to understand and cope with the stresses caused by work/family conflicts.
- How to manage home and work time effectively.
- How to find, evaluate, and select child care.
- How to identify and use resources which can assist working parents.

**2. A second vehicle for providing information to parents is through written articles and brochures.**

The committee also concluded that articles should be written in the *Circulator* and other Honeywell publications which:

- Identify and publicize community agencies and programs which focus on resolving work/family problems of working parents.
- Focus on positive approaches used by Honeywell employees to handle particular work/family problems.

## CHILD CARE FACILITIES COMMITTEE

The most complex and difficult issue addressed by the Working Parents Task Force was child care facilities. Because of the impact of child care arrangements upon working parents, a variety of means for providing assistance with these arrangements was explored by the committee.

Committee discussion was based on:

- Review of studies by Honeywell's Women's Task Force, the Minneapolis Child Care Interagency Work Group, the Citizens League, and the Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association.
- Interviews with professionals who deliver services to families and children.
- Interviews with other large employers, both locally and nationally.

The committee identified the following problems as the most serious faced by working parents and drew several conclusions:

1. At the present time, obtaining information about child care facilities is difficult. Several agencies provide information about facilities but the information is often not current and is limited to particular sections of the metropolitan area. There has been no single, comprehensive system of referral. For this reason, parents may have to make as many as 40 phone calls to locate child care. Providers also must devote time to responding to these calls.

   To help working parents locate child care, Honeywell has contributed $25,000 and staff support to a group of non-profit child care referral agencies to develop a computerized Child Care Information Network. The Network has two objectives: to assist Hennepin County parents in finding appropriate child care through exisiting facilities, and to provide child care providers, employers, funders, and public agencies with information about the types of additional facilities where demand exceeds supply. Further information about the computerized Child Care Information Network is available in Appendix 2.

2. Much of the child care in Hennepin County is unlicensed. There is only an informal, word of mouth network for locating unlicensed child care. To help parents use the informal system more effectively, one of the committee's recommendations is to collect and publicize the experiences of parents who have located and used informal child care successfully.

3. Finding affordable child care is a continuing problem for some Honeywell employees. Sixty-three percent of the respondents in the Women's Task Force study said that financial constraints limited the kind of child care they could select. They felt they do not have the opportunity to choose the best possible environment for their children.

The committee concluded that a child care option should be added to any flexible benefit program the company may offer in the future. A child care option would maximize the choices parents have in selecting the kind of child care they feel best meets their children's needs without jeopardizing equitable treatment of employees who do not have children.

Another way to address the cost of child care is through federal and state legislation which is proposed, occasionally, to provide financial relief to parents using child care. The Child Care Facilities Committee recommended that Honeywell's Public Affairs Department be asked to review and support child care legislation when appropriate.

4. Selecting child care is often a trial and error process that can result in a number of problems for both parents and children. The Child Care Facilities Committee recommended that parents be interviewed about strategies they have used to select satisfactory child care and methods for on-going communication with child care providers. The results of these interviews can then be published and distributed.

5. Locating child care for infants, for children whose parents work on an early morning shift or beyond the traditional closing times, for children who need child care before and after school, and for sick children is particularly difficult. The computerized system is expected to demonstrate these needs. The commitee concluded that future Honeywell funding of child care facilities or programs be focused on projects which address these needs.

6. The problem of locating child care for sick children directly affects Honeywell's productivity. When a child of working parents is sick, there are few options available. Most providers do not care for sick children. Many parents simply stay home. A fourth of the respondents in the Women's Task Force study indicated that sick children accounted for an average of eight days of absence a year.

   Although the Child Care Facilities Committee recognized that the care of sick children resulted in significant losses in productivity, no viable options for addressing this problem were identified. The costs of hiring qualified personnel to take care of sick children are prohibitive to most people and few agencies are able to provide such service on short notice. The committee members concluded that alternatives for the care of sick children should continue to be explored by the Working Parents Advisory Committee and that the company should consider funding a pilot project in this area if a promising project is submitted for funding.

7. Working parents at Honeywell who travel out of town on company business are not reimbursed for the cost of overnight child care. Since overnight child care is a necessary work expense, the committee concluded that employees should be reimbursed as they are for other business expenses such as automobile mileage.

8. Employees and others regularly inquire as as to whether Honeywell will develop an on-site child care facility. After thoroughly evaluating the experiences of other large employers, the task force did not recommend that Honeywell open a center. It costs between $150,000 and $200,000 to develop and operate a center. The high costs, possible underutilization by employees, legal liabilities, and selecting one location from among 36 are constraints which outweigh the possible advantages of providing care for a limited number of children. For more information, see Appendix 3.

9. Staff members of child care centers and family daycare homes are often not adequately trained to manage the business aspects of their programs. Honeywell has traditionally given managerial and technical assistance to projects which benefit both employees and the wider community. The committee recommended that Honeywell continue to provide management expertise to child care groups.

10. Honeywell is often asked to be a resource to other corporations as they develop programs to assist working parents. We are also asked to provide a corporate perspective to organizations planning conferences, workshops, or newsletters about work/family issues. The committee concluded that we should continue to respond to those requests for assistance.

## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Honeywell's Working Parents Task Force makes the following recommendations:

1. Institute a company-wide flextime policy.

2. Continue to explore the possibility of expanding permanent part-time position options.

3. Include a child care option as part of any cafeteria style benefit plan the company may offer.

4. Implement an information series for working parents at locations where large numbers of young parents are employed.

5. Publish articles in the *Circulator* which focus on how parents can manage work/family problems more effectively.

6. Publicize community resources which serve working parents and their children.

7. Provide information on how to locate child care facilities, select providers, and communicate in a manner that ensures the best possible care.

8. Ask the Public Affairs Department to monitor legislative issues which affect needs of working parents and support such legislation when appropriate.

9. Reimburse parents for overnight child care costs incurred while traveling on company business.

10. Provide information on sick child care services and continue to explore strategies for the care of sick children.

11. Ask the Corporate Commmunity Relations Department to consider funding a pilot project to provide child care for sick children at a reasonable cost by contracting with organizations which provide sick child care.

12. Continue to serve as a resource to other companies interested in developing child care programs. Continue to explore mutual avenues for action with other corporations.

13. Continue to provide managerial, technical, and legal assistance to child care centers and family day care centers when appropriate.

14. Direct future funding of child care toward projects which involve the care of infants and toddlers, sick children, and children of parents who work other than an 8 to 5 schedule.

# APPENDIX 1

# PROPOSED FLEXTIME POLICY

## Purpose

Honeywell recognizes that individual preferences in hours of work for any given day vary throughout the year. Provided business conditions permit, it is important wherever possible to maximize the employee's choice in establishing his/her hours of work within the confines of the business environment in which he/she works. Honeywell's goal is to ensure that business and personal needs are to the maximum extent possible satisfied in an efficient and compatible manner.

## Scope

This policy is to be implemented world-wide where it is consistent with local regulation and/or law and cultural considerations.

## Policy

Provided business conditions allow and the work flow permits, individual employees or groups of employees will be permitted to vary their specific report-to-work and depart-from-work times, so long as the minimum standard number of hours per day is worked. Obviously, attainment of our business objectives have first priority; consequently, the amount of scheduling flexibility will necessarily differ between various facilities, operations, departments and jobs. It will, therefore, be the responsibility of each Divisional/Center General Manager to establish specific guidelines within their various operations regarding the degree and form of flexibility in work hours. Managers and supervisors shall then be permitted to meet employee needs within these guidelines. It is also the responsibility of each manager to ensure that employees work no less than the normally required number of daily work hours.

## Interpretation

Flexible hours relates to the times an employee will report to and depart from work. Use of flexible hours in a given operation may range from use of "summer hours" or rescheduling to shift times, to individualized reporting and departing times. Once the corridor for flexible reporting and departing times in an operation has been determined, employee input is essential for determining the specific hours for each individual. A change in the number of days worked in a week, the accumulation of hours, or the carry-over of hours to another week are not contemplated in this definition.

## APPENDIX 2

## COMPUTERIZED CHILD CARE INFORMATION NETWORK

A computerized information and referral system supported by Honeywell, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55408.

The Child Care Information Network, a computerized information and referral system for Minneapolis and the surrounding communities in Hennepin County, is comprised of members from three non-profit community organizations, the Child Care Resource Center/Southside, the Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association and North Suburban Child Care Association. The system supplies information for parents, child care providers, public agencies and members of business and industry. This coordinated I & R project not only maximizes the use of available child care slots, but will serve as an assessment of what kinds of child care facilities are needed. Data collected from over 1600 questionaires sent to all child care providers in Hennepin County is entered into the computers. A hard disk system is located at GMDCA with satellite computers at the other two founding agencies. The decentralized system will enable workers to update listings at any of the three sites. During the evening hours, the computers will exchange information so that all three will contain current compatible listings. Referrals will be made from all three locations. The system should be operating by early fall.

In addition to supplying names and addresses of providers, the computerized database will also have non-traditional information (which is not currently available from existing sources) on file. Nearby bus routes, schools, major highways hours of operation, cost, financial aid, and special services for handicapped or non-English speaking children are examples of the kinds of information available. Statistics will also be tabulated on number of calls received, type of care requested, age group of child and location of parent, for planning purposes.

Although the network is currently funded only by private sources, CCIN is considering offering its services to business and industry on a subscription basis for a fee. Among the services which will be offered are updated provider lists, workshops for employers and employees on how to select child care, and a private telephone line to be used exclusively by businesses. Numerous businesses which are beginning to recognize the need of child care facilities for their employees have expressed inerest in this project. There will be no charge to parents who call for referrals.

For further information, contact Sonia Sands, Employee Assistance program, Honeywell Inc., Honeywell Plaza, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55408 or call 612-870-5247.

## APPENDIX 3

## ON SITE CHILD CARE

**Honeywell** Interoffice Correspondence

Date: July 14, 1981

Subject: **CHILD CARE ON SITE**

To: Joan Pearson

From: Sonia Sands
Organization: Employee Assistance Program
HED: MN12
MS: 1107
HVN: 541-5247

In July 1980, The Womens Task Force Published a child care study in which they recommended, as one option, that Honeywell explore the concept of developing on site child care facility. Employees regularly request on site child care.

After thoroughly evaluating the benefits and disadvantages of corporate child care as experienced by other large employers, The Child Care Facilities Committee of the Working Parents Task Force has decided not to develop a facility at any of our sites. We will continue to promote more appropriate and effective solutions to the child care problems of employees.

A number of corporate employers throughout the nation have developed full-time child care facilities. Locally, only Control Data and Cardiac Pacemaker have developed centers on site. In general, employers have so 1) as the most direct way to supply dependable child care for employees, 2) as a visible sign of concern for working parents, 3) to foster good public relations, 4) to facilitate parent's access to their children during the working day, and 5) to promote productivity by reducing absenteeism.

Many other corporations which operated child care facilities on their sites have failed in their efforts. They cite main reasons why corporations should not design and operate programs at their own facilities.

1. Costs: The costs of starting a child care center range from conservative estimates of $50,000 up to $300,000. Bev Propes, former director of the North Side Community Center which was started by Control Data in 1970, says the company should also provide enough cash flow to maintain the center for three years.

   Once the center is functional, the cost of child care to parents is so high that most employers have had to subsidize parents. Government cutbacks have reduced the number who can obtain public funding. Continuing costs are the main reason corporate child care has failed.

2. Underutilization: Most companies began their programs because employees indicated they would use it. In practice, many employees found it inconvenient to bring their children to the center, that the service was too expensive, or that they no longer needed it once the program began. Fluctuating attendance was a problem that was only partially solved by opening enrollment to community people.

3. In addition: Corporations have legal liabilites for accidents which happen at their own child care centers.

4. It is difficult to operate a program for children of all ages, including infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers.

Honeywell is a unique corporation in this metropolitan community in having 36 facilities. Employees live in widely dispersed geographic communities. It would be difficult to select one site which would be convenient for most or even many working parents. It would be unfair to offer child care to employees at one facility only.

Further, it seems uneconomical to spend even the estimated amounts of money to establish and maintain a program which benefits only a few parents rather than develop broadly based programs which are available to all working parents. Legal, utilization and program problems cited above are additional reasons why we advise against building a child care facility on any Honeywell sites at this time.